



The Old Ironsides Report

Monday, May 03, 2004



Cavalry Soldiers find innovative, time-tested ways to fill downtime

Story and photo by Sgt. Christopher Stanis, 1AD PAO
BAGHDAD, Iraq – Free time is possibly the most valuable and sacred commodity Soldiers have.

After more than a year in a combat zone, the troops of Task Force 1st Armored Division are unearthing new ways, as well as pulling out the old tricks, to keep from getting bored.

For Spc. Justin Pierce, books have become a major time killer.

"I've lost count," said the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment medic on how many books he's read in Iraq. "When we got extended, I bought four more."

Pierce's reading tastes tracks toward the fantasy genre.

On nearly every Soldier's bunk can be found a book – from romance to mystery, suspense to science fiction, self-help and war epics.

But reading goes beyond a good book. Almost every Soldier has his or her favorite magazine, last week's edition of *"Stars and Stripes,"* or the latest issue of *"The Amazing Spiderman"* or some other comic tome.

Games are a decades-enduring pastime for deployed troops -- board games, cards and now video games. You name it, they play it.

For card games, Spades makes the top cut. It's four players, it's fast paced and, and Soldiers claim nearly everyone knows how to play.

"It's a stress reliever," said Sgt. Cleveland Shuler, a telecommunications specialist with Headquarters and Headquarters Troop. "When I'm playing this, I get to talk (trash.)"

Technology – laptop computers and portable video game systems – have revolutionized how deployed Soldiers spend their off-duty hours.

"Game Boy's been a life saver," said Pierce. The personal pick of game for him and fellow medic Spc. Heath Carter: role-playing games.

"They take a long time to beat, so it gives you something to do for a while," Carter said.

Hollywood may be too fast to keep up with, and the distance to the nearest video rental store may be insurmountable, but the Soldiers in Iraq are managing to stay on top of the hottest new movie releases, and of course the classics.

Pfc. Corey Sweeney, a signal support systems specialist with HHT, is a fan of kung fu films.

"That's the reality I choose to live – where people can jump 20 feet high," Sweeney joked about his kung fu addiction. "When someone throws a punch it should make sounds like 'whoop-tsh.'"



Signal Soldiers from Regimental Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment, play cards during some downtime.

But Pierce and company stick with comedies.

"We usually watch funny movies," he said. "They help keep the spirits up."

If nothing else, Soldiers can be found spilling and soaking up the latest gossip like old hens on Sunday afternoon. They talk about the deployment, the road behind, the road ahead, home, significant others, their children, politics, sports and anything else that keeps their mouths running.

"A lot of conversation will be about family," said Sgt. 1st Class Wendell Byers, an intelligence analyst with HHT. "Also, about what's going on next (in the deployment.) We know what we're doing; we just don't know what's going to happen."

Byers said another popular topic is sports, but it is difficult to keep up to date so any new information is like feeding fish.

"Most people don't know what's going on (in sports)," he said. "So if they hear you know something, you've got their attention."

Soldiers, being an innovative breed, can always find something to occupy their time, but no matter the topic of discussion, no matter the past-time event, downtime is bonding time for Soldiers waiting out their time in Iraq.

"It's like a club," Carter said. "We turn up the music and just sit around, relax and talk."

NEWS...

U.S. Hostage Hamill Escapes in Iraq

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) - American hostage Thomas Hamill, kidnapped three weeks ago in an insurgent attack on his convoy, was found by U.S. forces Sunday south of Tikrit after he apparently escaped from his captors, the U.S. military said. An official said he was in good health. Hamill, 43, of Macon, Miss., was discovered when he approached a U.S. patrol from the 2nd Battalion 108th Infantry, part of the New York National Guard, in the town of Balad, 35 miles south of Tikrit, a spokesman for U.S. troops in Tikrit said.

U.S.: No Widespread Abuse in Iraq Prisons

WASHINGTON (AP) - Top U.S. military officer Gen. Richard Myers said Sunday there is no widespread pattern of abuse of Iraqi prisoners and that the actions of "just a handful" of U.S. troops at a Baghdad prison have unfairly tainted all American forces. An internal Army report found that Iraqi detainees were subjected to "sadistic, blatant and wanton criminal abuses" at the Abu Ghraib prison near Baghdad, according to The New Yorker magazine, which said it obtained a copy of the report.

Al-Sadr Forces Attack U.S. Convoy in Iraq

NAJAF, Iraq (AP) - Shiite militiamen attacked a U.S. convoy in southern Iraq, killing two soldiers and setting vehicles on fire, even as mediators were trying Sunday to find a resolution to the U.S. standoff with the militia's leader. Two other American soldiers were killed in Baghdad. American hostage Thomas Hamill was found by U.S. forces south of Tikrit Sunday after he apparently escaped from his captors, the U.S. military said. Hamill, 43, of Macon, Miss., had been held since an April 9 attack on a convoy.

Afghan, U.S. Officials Agree on New Force

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) - The U.S. military and Afghan officials have agreed to establish a new militia to fight an insurgency flaring across the south and east of the country, the Afghan Defense Ministry said Sunday. Recruited from militias across the country, the new Afghan Guard Force will consist of about 2,000 men, said defense ministry spokesman Gen. Zahir Azimi.

Christmas cards in May???

Though it seems strange, many Iron Soldiers will soon receive mail that was postmarked in December 2003. Unfortunately, several boxes of mail were mislabeled for "Baghdad, Iraq" instead of "APO AE 09324."

These mislabeled boxes were sent directly from the States to the Iraqi post office in downtown Baghdad. Recently, the mis-directed mail was discovered by the Joint Military Mail Terminal on BIAP. The 55th Postal Det. received the mail May 1 and has already begun processing and distributing the delayed mail to 1AD soldiers. — From 55th PSD.

Bush Praises Troops at Journalism Dinner

By KATA KERTESZ, Associated Press Writer
WASHINGTON (AP) -- President Bush tempered lighthearted remarks to a gathering of journalists Saturday with a declaration that the nation is in a "period of testing and sacrifice" spearheaded by a "new generation of Americans as brave and decent as any before it."

"As I speak, men and women in uniform are taking great risks and so are many journalists are being faithful to their own sense of duty," the president told the 90th annual White House Correspondents' Association dinner.

Referring to upcoming events honoring the World War II generation, he said those warriors can be certain "that when they are gone we will still have their kind wearing the uniform of the United States of America."

He said the death last month of former professional football player Pat Tillman "brought home the sorrow that comes with every loss and reminds us of the character of the men and women who serve on our behalf."

The president said Tillman "was modest because he knew there were many like him making their own sacrifices."

"They fill the ranks of the armed forces," he continued. "Everyday somewhere they do brave and good things without notice. Their courage is usually seen only by their comrades, by those who long to be free and by the enemy. They are willing to give up their lives and when one is lost a whole world of hopes and possibilities is lost with them. This evening we think of the families who grieve and the families that wait on a loved one's safe return."

Bush, who made a handful of lighter remarks at the beginning of his brief remarks, delivered a similarly solemn address to last year's gathering, focusing on journalists killed in war.

He paid tribute again this year to some of those same reporters who died covering the initial stages of the war in Iraq and also singled out Time magazine senior correspondent Michael Weisskopf, who suffered severe shrapnel wounds and lost his hand when he tried to throw away a grenade tossed into a Humvee he was riding in with a Time photographer and two U.S. soldiers in Iraq.

Bush said Weisskopf showed "incredible presence of mind and courage that have won our admiration," adding that "this generation of wartime journalists has done fine work and much more and they will be remembered long after the first draft of history is completed."

Thought for the day...

Humility

The *Handbook of Magazine Article Writing* contains this illustration by Philip Barry Osborne: "Alex Haley, the author of *Roots*, has a picture in his office, showing a turtle sitting atop a fence. The picture is there to remind him of a lesson he learned long ago: 'If you see a turtle on a fence post, you know he had some help.'"

Says Alex, 'Any time I start thinking, Wow, isn't this marvelous what I've done! I look at that picture and remember how this turtle — me — got up on that post.'"

Today in history...

May 3, 1947: NEW JAPANESE CONSTITUTION ENACTED

(HISTROYCHANNEL.COM) -- On May 3, 1947, Japan's postwar constitution goes into effect. The progressive constitution granted universal suffrage, stripped Emperor Hirohito of all but symbolic power, stipulated a bill of rights, abolished peerage, and outlawed Japan's right to make war. The document was largely the work of Supreme Allied Commander Douglas MacArthur and his occupation staff, who had prepared the draft in February 1946 after a Japanese attempt was deemed unacceptable.

As the defender of the Philippines from 1941 to 1942, and commander of Allied forces in the Southwest Pacific theater from 1942 to 1945, Douglas MacArthur was the most acclaimed American general in the war against Japan. On September 2, 1945, aboard the USS *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay, he presided over the official surrender of Japan. According to the terms of surrender, Emperor Hirohito and the Japanese government were subject to the authority of the Supreme Commander for Allied Powers in occupied Japan, a post filled by General MacArthur.

On September 8, Supreme Commander MacArthur made his way by automobile through the ruins of Tokyo to the American embassy, which would be his home for the next five and a half years. The occupation was to be a nominally Allied enterprise, but increasing Cold War division left Japan firmly in the American sphere of influence. From his General Headquarters, which overlooked the Imperial Palace in central Tokyo, MacArthur presided over an extremely productive reconstruction of Japanese government, industry, and society along American models. MacArthur was a gifted administrator, and his progressive reforms were for the most part welcomed by the Japanese people.

The most important reform carried out by the American occupation was the establishment of a new constitution to replace the 1889 Meiji Constitution. In early 1946, the Japanese government submitted a draft for a new constitution to the General Headquarters, but it was rejected for being too conservative. MacArthur ordered his young staff to draft their own version in one week. The document, submitted to the Japanese government on February 13, 1946, protected the civil liberties MacArthur had introduced and preserved the emperor, though he was stripped of power. Article 9 forbade the Japanese ever to wage war again.

Before Japan's defeat, Emperor Hirohito was officially regarded as Japan's absolute ruler and a quasi-divine figure. Although his authority was sharply limited in practice, he was consulted with by the Japanese government and approved of its expansionist policies from 1931 through World War II. Hirohito feared, with good reason, that he might be indicted as a war criminal and the Japanese imperial house abolished. MacArthur's constitution at least preserved the emperor as the "symbol of the state and of the unity of the people," so Hirohito offered his support. Many conservatives in the government were less enthusiastic, but on April 10, 1946, the new constitution was endorsed in popular elections that allowed Japanese women to vote for the first time. The final draft, slightly revised by the Japanese government, was made public one week later. On November 3, it was promulgated by the Diet--the Japanese parliament--and on May 3, 1947, it came into force.

In 1948, Yoshida Shigeru's election as prime minister ushered in the Yoshida era, marked by political stability and rapid economic growth in Japan. In 1949, MacArthur gave up much of his authority to the Japanese government, and in September 1951 the United States and 48 other nations signed a formal peace treaty with Japan. On April 28, 1952, the treaty went into effect, and Japan assumed full sovereignty as the Allied occupation came to an end.



MWR "CINCO DE MAYO" PARTY

5 MAY 04

STARTS: 1730

Celebrate! MWR RECREATION CENTER, BLAP



MEXICAN FOOD & FIXINS - 1730

Chips, Refried Beans, Tacos, Cheese Enchiladas, Mexican Rice, Dessert, Beverage, Hot Sauces

ENTERTAINMENT: MUSIC AND DANCING - 1730

DJ "Leon" will turn on the hot music

1930- Dance Demonstration: Learn to Dance by "Angel" the Salsa, Merengue and Bachata.

GAMES & ACTIVITIES - 1730

1730- Limbo Competition

1745- Dominos Tournament - main room

1800- Tortilla Toss- Fling your tortilla into the basketball hoop

1830- Chip and Dip Tag Team Challenge- A bowl of chips and salsa is provided in the front of each participant. The first partner must eat a chip and salsa without using hands when you cannot eat any more, your partner tags and takes over until finish.

1900- Jalapeno and Cheese Sauce licking race- both on a plate must get all the jalapenos and eat them. Still leaving the cheese.

1930- Ping Pong Tournament- SINGLE elimination- main room



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myafn.net TV SCHEDULES: MONDAY, MAY 03, 2004

As of: Sunday, May 02, 2004 8:17:45 PM

Start Time	SPORTS	ATLANTIC	SPECTRUM	PACIFIC	NEWS	Start Time
00:00	NHL - PLAYOFFS - 2ND ROUND GM 5: TORONTO MAPLE LEAFS @ PHILADELPHIA FLYERS		AMERICAN IDOL (TVG):		CNN SUNDAY	00:00
01:00			AMERICAN IDOL (TVG):		MEET THE PRESS	01:00
01:30			THE TWILIGHT ZONE (TVPG): - FIVE CHARACTERS IN SEARCH OF AN EXIT			01:30
02:00		ESPNEWS	FANTASY ISLAND (TVG): - LADY AND THE LONGHORN/ VAMPIRE		TIM RUSSERT	02:00
02:30	SPORTSCENTER	ESPNEWS				02:30
03:00	BASEBALL TONIGHT	HEADLINE NEWS	THE WILD THORNBERRYS (TVY): - NO LAUGHING MATTER	SESAME STREET	FOX REPORT	03:00
03:30		SEINFELD (TV14): - THE LIP READER	THE FAIRLY ODDPARENTS			03:30
04:00	MLB - BOSTON RED SOX @ TEXAS RANGERS	THAT 70'S SHOW (TVPG): - ERIC'S DEPRESSION	THE SIMPSONS (TVPG): - MR. PLOW	DORA THE EXPLORER (TVY): - ROBERTO THE ROBOT	THIS WEEK	04:00
04:30		ENTERTAINMENT TONIGHT (TVPG):	THE COSBY SHOW (TVG): - WHERE'S RUDY	WHEEL OF FORTUNE (TVG):		04:30
05:00			AVERAGE JOE (TV14): - LOOKS VS. CHARM	THE DR. PHIL SHOW (TVPG):	DATELINE INTERNATIONAL	05:00
05:30		WWE SMACKDOWN! (TV14):				05:30
06:00				THE OPRAH WINFREY SHOW (TVPG):	60 MINUTES	06:00
06:30		AMERICA'S BLACK FORUM	WHOSE LINE IS IT ANYWAY? (TVPG):			06:30
07:00	SPORTSCENTER	MEET THE PRESS	THE NEW DETECTIVES (TV14): - AT CLOSE RANGE	HEADLINE NEWS	CNN PRESENTS	07:00
07:30				JUDGE JUDY (TVPG):		07:30
08:00		HEADLINE NEWS	NOVA (TVPG): - BUILDING BIG: DAMS	ACCESS HOLLYWOOD	LARRY KING LIVE	08:00
08:25				GUIDING LIGHT (TV14):		08:25
08:30	BASEBALL TONIGHT	ESPNEWS				08:30
09:00		SESAME STREET	TREKKIES		CNN SUNDAY NIGHT	09:00
09:13				GENERAL HOSPITAL (TV14):		09:13
09:30	SPORTSCENTER					09:30
10:00		DORA THE EXPLORER (TVY): - ROBERTO THE ROBOT		LILLO & STITCH: THE ANIMATED SERIES (TVG): - SWIRLY	ACCESS HOLLYWOOD	10:00
10:30		WHEEL OF FORTUNE (TVG):		DIGIMON: DIGITAL MONSTERS (TVY7): - THE PRISONER OF THE PYRAMID		10:30
11:00	PGA TOUR - HP CLASSIC OF NEW ORLEANS: FINAL ROUND	THE DR. PHIL SHOW (TVPG):	THE WILD THORNBERRYS (TVY): - NO LAUGHING MATTER	I SPY (TVY): - A BIKE I LIKE/ATICK-ILLY HICCUP	BELTWAY BOYS	11:00
11:30			THE FAIRLY ODDPARENTS	EVEN STEVENS (TVG): - BROADCAST BLUES	FOX NEWS WATCH	11:30
11:46		THE OPRAH WINFREY SHOW (TVPG):				11:46
12:00			THE SIMPSONS (TVPG): - MR. PLOW	JEOPARDY! (TVG):	BULLS & BEARS	12:00
12:30			THE COSBY SHOW (TVG): - WHERE'S RUDY	HEADLINE NEWS	CAVUTO ON BUSINESS	12:30
12:35		GUIDING LIGHT (TV14):				12:35
12:52				PACIFIC REPORT		12:52
13:00			AVERAGE JOE (TV14): - LOOKS VS. CHARM	ESPNEWS	DATELINE NBC	13:00
13:17		GENERAL HOSPITAL (TV14):				13:17
13:30				HEADLINE NEWS		13:30
13:52				PACIFIC REPORT		13:52
14:00	SPORTSCENTER	HEADLINE NEWS		60 MINUTES		14:00
14:30		JUDGE JUDY (TVPG):	WHOSE LINE IS IT ANYWAY? (TVPG):			14:30
15:00		TODAY	THE NEW DETECTIVES (TV14): - AT CLOSE RANGE	COLD CASE (TV14): - GLEEN	GOOD MORNING AMERICA	15:00
15:30	NBA FASTBREAK					15:30
16:00	NHL - PLAYOFFS - GM 5: TORONTO MAPLE LEAFS @ PHILADELPHIA FLYERS		NOVA (TVPG): - BUILDING BIG: DAMS	WITHOUT A TRACE (TVPG): - THERE GOES THE BRIDE		16:00
17:00		LILLO & STITCH: THE ANIMATED SERIES (TVG): - SWIRLY	TREKKIES	HEADLINE NEWS	HEADLINE NEWS	17:00
17:22				PACIFIC REPORT		17:22
17:30		DIGIMON: DIGITAL MONSTERS (TVY7): - THE PRISONER OF THE PYRAMID		TONIGHT SHOW WITH JAY LENO (TVPG):	CHANNEL ONE	17:30
17:45					ABC WORLD NEWS THIS MORNING	17:45
18:00	BASEBALL TONIGHT	I SPY (TVY): - A BIKE I LIKE/ATICK-ILLY HICCUP			THE EARLY SHOW	18:00
18:30		EVEN STEVENS (TVG): - BROADCAST BLUES		THE LATE SHOW WITH DAVID LETTERMAN (TVPG):		18:30
19:00	SPORTSCENTER	JEOPARDY! (TVG):	THE WILD THORNBERRYS (TVY): - NO LAUGHING MATTER			19:00
19:30		HEADLINE NEWS	THE FAIRLY ODDPARENTS	ACCESS HOLLYWOOD		19:30
20:00		ESPNEWS	THE SIMPSONS (TVPG): - MR. PLOW	GO FOR BROKE	FOX NEWS LIVE	20:00
20:30	ESPNEWS	HEADLINE NEWS	THE COSBY SHOW (TVG): - WHERE'S RUDY			20:30
21:00	MLB - CHICAGO CUBS @ ST. LOUIS CARDINALS	60 MINUTES	AVERAGE JOE (TV14): - LOOKS VS. CHARM		DATELINE NBC	21:00
21:45				ICEMAN		21:45
22:00		COLD CASE (TV14): - GLEEN				22:00
22:30			WHOSE LINE IS IT ANYWAY? (TVPG):			22:30
23:00		WITHOUT A TRACE (TVPG): - THERE GOES THE BRIDE	THE NEW DETECTIVES (TV14): - AT CLOSE RANGE		HEADLINE NEWS	23:00
23:30				CINEMA SECRETS (TVG): - SNAP SHOT	INSIDE POLITICS	23:30